

09/10/87

PAGE 1

NAME 3 : *SOURCE* ID # 2 : 0400
AKA 16 : *Source* CONFIDENTIALITY 37 : YES
BOAT NUMBER 34 : CONTACTED 32 :
CATEGORY: 8
CNTRY LOCATED 23 : STATE/CITY 15 :
CNTRY REPORTED 10 : VS
TYPE SIGHTING 46 : NO PW INFORMATION
1ST SIGHTING 42 : 11 12
SUBSOURCES 27 :
ACTIONS 51 : 791010 CIA 102033Z
800126 REUTR PRESS ARTICLE
CURRENT ACT 45 : CAPTIVITY 39 :
REMARKS 36 : SAIGON MECHANIC-HURT DEBRIEF ANALYST 13 : RH
DATE RECEIVED 8 : 791011 DATE OF INFO 35 : 0000
ACT DATE 36 : ADDRESS 25 :
ORIGIN CODE 17 : D
POLYGRAPH CATEGORY 53 :
POLYGRAPH RESULTS 24 :
added 23 Sept
add 8002 28 Vietnam New
LTR-

INTERIM REPORT

OF

INTERVIEW WITH

DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
DIRECTORATE FOR INTELLIGENCE
AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
PLANS AND POLICY DIVISION
PW/MIA BRANCH

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INTERIM REPORT

OF

INTERVIEW WITH SOURCE

I. Introduction

On 5 October 1979, SOURCE appeared at the American Embassy Paris where he requested political asylum. It was reported that SOURCE had fled to Paris while accompanying a Vietnamese delegation in Turin, Italy. In a subsequent message issued by an Embassy official, SOURCE was characterized as a Vietnam Communist Party Secretary who was the supervisor of a vehicle maintenance shop assigned to the Irrigation Ministry in Saigon. The message indicated that SOURCE had been asked about the Prisoner of War/Missing in Action (PW/MIA) topic but stated that he had no related information. The Embassy official indicated that he felt that SOURCE was cooperative during the interview and that SOURCE would be referred to refugee channels for entry to the U.S.

Subsequently, on 26 January and 3 March 1980, two articles appeared in the French press which identified SOURCE as the Communist Party General Secretary for the Saigon region, which is a position higher than that claimed by SOURCE during his debriefing at the American Embassy on 5 October 1979.

On 13 February 1980, Mrs. Le Thi Anh, a voluntary translator associated with the National League of Families of Americans Prisoner and Missing in Southeast Asia, received a letter from a Mr. SOURCE, a refugee previously interviewed by DIA concerning the PW/MIA issue. The letter indicated that Mr. SOURCE was in possession of PW/MIA information and that he desired to speak to Mrs. Anh in person in order to provide his information. SOURCE had a previous relationship with Mrs. Anh and apparently communicated with Mrs. Anh after he became acquainted with SOURCE in Paris in early 1980. This information was received by DIA from Mrs. Ann Mills Griffiths, Executive Director of the National League of Families, who advised that SOURCE's letter was in response to a telephonic inquiry made by Anh to SOURCE concerning SOURCE's possible knowledge on the PW/MIA topic.

On 28 February 1980, Mrs. Anh wrote to Congressman D. Bonker (D-Wash) recommending that he bring SOURCE to the U.S. for testimony before Congress on social topics, including the U.S. PW issue as it relates to Socialist Republic of Vietnam (SRV) policy concerning U.S. aid and "war reparation."

On 20 March 1980, it was requested that the Defense Attache Office (DAO) Paris contact SOURCE and insure his presence at the Embassy in Paris on 31 March for the purpose of interviewing him on the PW/MIA topic. The arrangements were confirmed by DAO Paris on 24 March 1980.

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On 22 March 1980, an article appeared in the French periodical L'Express which dealt with the U.S. PW/MIA issue. The article quoted two former high ranking Vietnamese who stated that approximately 30 American prisoners were still being held in Vietnam. The officials were unidentified in the article. Subsequent inquiry determined these two sources to be SOURCE and NAME, a second defector, also relocated in Paris, France.

II. Source's Background

During his 5-6 October debriefing at the American Embassy Paris, Mr. SOURCE provided the following biographical data:

He was born on SOURCE DATA at SOURCE DATA Village, SOURCE DATA District, SOURCE DATA Province, Central Vietnam. He moved north to SOURCE DATA Province, North Vietnam in 1954 with his mother and one brother. From 1955 to 1960, he attended the SOURCE DATA School in SD. In 1960, he moved with his family to Hanoi where he attended the SOURCE DATA Mechanical and Electrical School from 1960 to 1965. In 1965, he began two years of practical work in Hanoi and he received his university degree, with specialization in mechanical production, from the SOURCE DATA college in 1967. Beginning in February 1967 until autumn 1970 he was employed at an irrigation workshop in SOURCE DATA Hanoi. He studied in Leningrad, USSR, from autumn 1970 to August 1973 and from August 1973 until June 1975, he was Assistant Director of an electrical and mechanical school in SOURCE DATA Province, North Vietnam. From June 1976 to December 1978, he was the Assistant Director of a mechanical school at SOURCE DATA Province, South Vietnam. From December 1978 to October 1979, he was the Director of a mechanical repair shop (vehicle maintenance) located in Ho Chi Minh City, where he lived with an aunt at SOURCE DATA Street. The repair shop was subordinate to the Ministry of Irrigation, located at SOURCE DATA Street, Hanoi. In October 1979, he traveled to Italy as part of an eleven-man SRV delegation which was concerned with the purchase of agricultural equipment.

He is married to SOURCE DATA (DPOB: 1949, SD, North Vietnam), who currently resides in SOURCE DATA North Vietnam where she is employed as a teacher.

SOURCE became a probationary Lao Dong Party (Workers Party now known as the Vietnamese Communist Party) member in December 1968 and became an official Lao Dong Party member in July 1969. His wife is not a member of the Vietnamese Communist Party. He was a party secretary reporting directly to the Irrigation Minister in Hanoi at the time of his defection in Paris, France, while accompanying a delegation to Europe.

III. PW/MIA Information

On 28 March 1980, it was requested that the American Embassy Press Attache, C. Hensey, attempt to identify the two sources quoted in the L'Express article. On 29 March 1980, Mr. Hensey advised that a Vietnamese male, SOURCE who writes for L'Express, could identify the two sources referred to in the article.

On 29 March 1980, SOURCE was briefly interviewed and he advised that the two sources of the article in question were SOURCE and a former Minister of Justice of the PRG, SOURCE. SOURCE stated that he was present when L'Express managing editor Olivier Todd interviewed SOURCE on the topic of U.S. PW/MIA, but that he was not present when SOURCE was interviewed.

On 31 March 1980, SOURCE appeared at the Embassy for his initial interview on the PW/MIA issue in the company of a second Vietnamese who identified himself as SOURCE DATA. Also present was CPT Jerome Peterson, USA, linguist. After introductory remarks, SOURCE was asked by the interviewer if he was aware of the 22 March 1980 L'Express article concerning U.S. PW/MIAs. SOURCE said that he was not. When asked if he had been queried by any person concerning U.S. PW/MIAs he responded in the negative. He also stated that he had not been asked about PW/MIAs during his 5-6 October 1979 visit to the American Embassy. SOURCE was then asked if he had information relating to PW/MIAs. SOURCE stated that he had significant information, but that he had made an agreement with Mrs. Anh that he would speak with her prior to talking to DIA. SOURCE was then told by the interviewer that it would be necessary to speak to him privately. He stated that he had no objection to speaking to DIA alone, but he had merely wished to honor his commitment with Mrs. Anh. The meeting was then terminated with the request that SOURCE renew contact with DIA after having spoken with Mrs. Anh.

On 1 April 1980, Mrs. Anh was called as SOURCE had not recontacted the DIA representative. Mrs. Anh revealed that SOURCE was with her at that time. It was requested that she ask SOURCE if he would return to the Embassy on 2 April 1980. After a short pause, she indicated that SOURCE would return for further discussions on 2 April, but that he would insist that she be present. It was then agreed that he would return to the Embassy at 0900, 2 April 1980.

On 2 April 1980, SOURCE and Anh appeared at the Embassy. Mrs. Anh was then informed that her presence during the debriefing of SOURCE would not be allowed. After a brief discussion in Vietnamese between Mrs. Anh and SOURCE, he agreed to be interviewed alone. Both were then taken to an Embassy conference room to await the arrival of CPT Peterson. During this brief period, SOURCE took the opportunity to state that he had been misquoted by the French press in regard to his position within the Communist Party. He stated that he had consistently identified himself as a party secretary and a vehicle maintenance supervisor in the Irrigation Ministry of the SRV. He stated that he had never told anyone that he was the General Secretary for the Party for the Saigon region and that he felt that magnification of this position by the press had harmed his chances of entry to the U.S. He stated that during his 5-6 October 1979 visit to the Embassy he had been told that he would be granted

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entry to the U.S. in approximately eight months. After these comments, Mrs. Anh excused herself to go the visa section to inquire about the status of *SOURCE*'s immigration case. Shortly thereafter, CPT Peterson arrived.

SOURCE was again questioned about the L'Express article. He stated that he had been questioned by Mr. Todd in the presence of the writer *SC* at L'Express about many matters and that he told Todd that there were still American PWs being held by the SRV and that the PWs were useful to the policy of the Vietnamese government. He opined that the PW/MIA issue was important and for that reason spoke to Todd only in a general way. He added that he did not tell Todd the source of his information nor did he discuss the number of prisoners being held. *SOURCE* assumed that he was one of the sources quoted in the article, but Todd never told him that an article would be published. *SOURCE* stated that he had denied knowledge of the article during initial discussion with the DIA representative because he did not want to mention his involvement with the press in the presence of *SOURCE*. *SOURCE* then provided biographical data that was consistent with information provided during his 5-6 October 1979 debriefing.

SOURCE also provided a bound log book in which he had written all the information he knew concerning the PW/MIA issue. He had recorded this information in his book on the afternoon following the 31 March 1980 meeting. The DIA representative was allowed to photocopy this information, which consisted of three handwritten pages. *SOURCE* then stated that all of the information he possessed pertaining to PW/MIAs was recorded on the three pages.

SOURCE noted that during the war, a party publication, Nhan Dan routinely carried articles concerning war incidents. The names of U.S. pilots shot down and killed or captured were frequently included in these articles. Further, the articles often contained photos of captured U.S. personnel and crashed U.S. aircraft. *SOURCE* stated that the appearance of these articles was continually the subject of much criticism within the party as it was thought that there was too much detail concerning the U.S. personnel identified in the articles. *SOURCE* recalled reading one article which indicated that 4,500 U.S. aircraft had been shot down and that there were 2,522 U.S. prisoners, including Marines, infantry and pilots. He could not recall the date he had seen this article nor the publication in which it appeared. He recalled an article in Nhan Dan which addressed the battle of Long Bien Bridge (210330N, 1055200E) which occurred in 1966. The article reported that an F105D destroyed two sections of the bridge with a missile and that the aircraft was shot down after its attack on the bridge. The pilot was an older man with grey hair who wore civilian clothes and carried no ID card. The pilot, who was assumed to be a colonel, was killed in the crash. *SOURCE* stated that dead pilots were frequently buried near the crash site in unmarked graves while captured prisoners were transported to Hanoi where they were processed at Hao Lo Prison.

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Each prisoner was given one dong of rice daily, a rattan fan and a shirt. While living in Hanoi, he heard that U.S. PWs were held at Son La, Yen Bai, Son Tay, and Hanoi.

SOURCE advised that in late 1977 or early 1978, he attended secret party discussions for approximately ten days in Hanoi. The talks centered around Vietnamese Communist Party Resolution #4 and were conducted by Irrigation Minister Nguyen Thanh Binh. *SOURCE* stated that Binh was discussing various water projects and the money required to support those projects. It was during the discussions that Binh mentioned the SRV's policy in regard to U.S. prisoners. Binh commented that U.S. prisoners were very important to the accomplishment of SRV goals, that the SRV had learned from the Cuban War (sic) that each U.S. prisoner was exchanged for one plow and that U.S. prisoners were being held in Vietnam for \$3.2 billion in U.S. aid to rebuild the fatherland. Binh said that the prisoners are carefully protected and are in the process of studying Marxism-Leninism. Binh stated that some of the prisoners are being prepared for propaganda missions upon their return to the U.S., in the same manner that Algerians, Tunisians and Moroccans had been used. According to *SOURCE*, Binh's comments concerning U.S. prisoners were made in passing and the information was mentioned as one possible future source of funds for irrigation projects.

SOURCE stated that a correspondent for Nhan Dan, a man named Vo Hai, had told him in 1974 that there were 30 U.S. "progressive" PWs held in the Giang Vu District of Hanoi. They were housed in a Command cadre structure three kilometers (kms) from Hanoi and located on a highway between Hanoi and Cau Giay. Additionally, *SOURCE* reported that Vo Hai told him that one of the progressive prisoners was a Marine Captain named William who had deserted at Khe Sahn in 1968. *SOURCE* said that the marine had assumed the name "Ho Thua" and had been allowed to join the Vietnamese Communist Party. *SOURCE* stated that he had not been to this facility and had no further information regarding this group of PWs. According to Vo Hai, the U.S. prisoners are divided into several groups:

- a) Prisoners from wealthy families who were being held for eventual return for ransom.
- b) Incurable prisoners who would never be returned to the U.S.
- c) Progressive prisoners who were anti-war and had an anti-U.S. Government attitude. In 1974, the family members of the progressive prisoners were investigated by the U.S. Communist Party and some of the family members were allowed to visit the prisoners in Hanoi. These family members flew from the U.S. to Moscow and then on to Hanoi.

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SOURCE further stated that he visited the Revolutionary Museum in Hanoi in November 1978, with a group of students. He advised that the museum was next to the Opera House which is an eight-sided building, but could not recall the name of the street on which the museum was located. He said that he observed pictures of U.S. PWs in two rooms of the museum. The PWs names were affixed below each photograph, but *SOURCE* could not recall any of the names. He stated that the photographs were taken from the beginning of the war up to that time. He thought that some of the pictures were taken recently because there were spots on the wall for pictures to be added, and there were pictures missing. He opined that if one wanted to know about the status of U.S. prisoners in Vietnam, one would have to have photos taken of the pictures in the museum.

IV. Comments

From his reading of various party publications during the war years, *SOURCE* was able to provide only one piece of information which could possibly equate to a U.S. pilot shot down over Vietnam, the previously mentioned one incident concerning a 1966 attack by an F105D in which the pilot, an older man with grey hair, was killed. Records reflect that eleven U.S. aviators were shot down in 1966 within a 55 kilometer radius of the bridge. The senior pilot in this group was a USAF major who survived and was returned to U.S. control in 1973. Three of the downed aviators were lost over Vietnam in F105D aircraft. Two of these individuals survived and were also released by the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) in 1973. The one F105D fatality, a USAF Captain, had brown hair. His remains were eventually returned. Additionally, it is improbable that a U.S. military pilot would fly a F105 combat mission while attired in civilian clothing without identification.

Inquiry with CIA determined that Vietnamese Communist Party Resolutions #3 and #6, were published in 1977 and 1979, respectively. CIA currently holds no information on Party Resolutions #4 and #5. One CIA analyst advised that the fact that Resolutions #4 and #5 were unpublished indicates they were sensitive, and probably dealt with military or foreign affairs matters. This same analyst opined it would be unlikely that these sensitive resolutions would have been briefed to members of the Irrigation Ministry. Additional inquiries have been made to determine the nature of Party Resolution #4.

It is significant to note that on 17 October 1979, the French periodical, *Le Matin*, published an article dealing with the U.S. PW/MIA topic which quoted a Vietnamese refugee named Le Dinh, who had identified himself as a former SRV intelligence officer. The article reported that Le Dinh claimed that in 1974, 33 progressive U.S. PWs were held in a structure for command cadre located in Giang Vu District in Hanoi. The structure, according to Le Dinh, was located three kms from Hanoi. Le Dinh commented that he personally saw the prisoners as late as 1977, and that he became close to one of them, a Marine Captain named William X, who had taken the name "Ho

Thua." This Marine Captain, who was a Vietnamese Communist Party member, had deserted at Khe Sanh in 1968. The progressive prisoners were studying communist political ideology. Le Dinh said that Hanoi had requested that the American Communist Party investigate the backgrounds of the families of these progressive prisoners and noted that some of their families were able to join them by traveling through the East European nations.

During extensive debriefings by DIA, subsequent to the publication of the 17 October 1979 *Le Matin* article, Le Dinh advised that he did not know the name of the Marine Captain and that he created the name "William X" to simplify discussions with *Le Matin* personnel. The fact that the name "William X" was created by Le Dinh coupled with the fact that *SOURCE* referred to the Marine as "William" suggests that *SOURCE* may have obtained his information concerning the 33 PWs from the 17 October 1979 *Le Matin* article, or from some person who was familiar with the article, rather than from a Communist correspondent as he claimed. However, this inference does not negate the possibility that U.S. PWs are held at the location reported by Le Dinh.

On 1 April 1980, O. Todd (Managing Editor *L'Express*) was interviewed briefly. Todd advised that he had interviewed *SC* on 1 April 1980, and that Tang had told him, without elaboration that there were "Americans still held in the North but none in the South." Todd acknowledged that *SOURCE* and *SC* were the two sources of the 22 March 1980 *L'Express* article dealing with PW/MIAs. Todd stated that he first met Tang on 1 April 1980 and that an unidentified subordinate at *L'Express* had interviewed *SC* for the article. Todd said that *SC* had refused to see any Americans during the 1 April 1980 interview. Efforts to interview *SC* continue.

V. Conclusion

It is possible that *SOURCE* has accurately reported discussions concerning Party Resolution #4. However, attempts to corroborate these statements have been unproductive. Neither CIA nor NSA currently hold information on Party Resolution #4. With data provided by USMC, attempts to identify the "William X" referred to by Le Dinh continue. *SOURCE* has failed to provide any substantive information which might correlate with Americans known missing in Vietnam at this time. *SOURCE* categorically refused to submit to a polygraph examination.

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